

REMARKS

Please enter the above amendments prior to examination of this application.

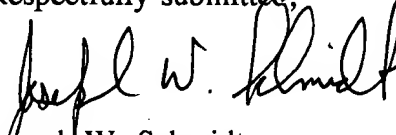
The present continuation application was filed to correct inventorship of parent application Serial No. 08/615,379, filed March 14, 1996. The claims now pending in this application are identical (except for claim 22 as discussed hereinbelow) to the corresponding claims allowed in the parent '379 application. Claim 22 of this application differs from its counterpart in the '379 application only with regard to the second limitation which recites "...inserting the distal end *portion* of the *sleeve member* within the intervertebral space..." - the departures from the original claim being emphasized in italics.

The present application containing claims 2-19 and 22-27 is believed to patentably distinguish over the prior art disclosures considered, individually, or in combination. Accordingly, allowance of the claims is respectfully requested. In the event that the Examiner believes that a telephone conference or a personal interview may facilitate resolution of any refining matters, Applicants' attorney may be contacted at the number indicated below. In view of the foregoing remarks, early and favorable consideration of this application is respectfully requested.

An Information Disclosure Statement is being submitted with this Preliminary

Amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Joseph W. Schmidt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joseph" and last name "Schmidt" being clearly legible, and "W." in the middle.

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